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Mobster Murder

Generally the execution-style slaying of an underworld character produces scant public attention. Such murders infrequently are solved and the general attitude seems to be good riddance. But the murder of John Roselli has overtones which go beyond the usual motives of such crimes.

Roselli was one of several gangland figures identified a year ago as part of an attempt by the CIA to assassinate Cuban dictator Fidel Castro. Roselli testified before Senate investigators about his involvement in the plot, claiming the CIA offered him \$100,000 to poison Castro.

That testimony was given in June, 1975, only a few days after another underworld figure, Sam Giancana, was shot to death in his Chicago home. Giancana also was implicated in the Castro plot and was scheduled to testify in the congressional probe.

The murders of both of these important witnesses in themselves raise suspicions that they were more than run-of-the-mill underworld executions. But there is more.

Roselli made a second appearance before the congressional panel, this one not revealed publicly until his death. On that occasion, in April of this year, Roselli's testimony centered on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. That testimony was given secretly and has not been revealed.

The discovery of Roselli's body floating in an oil can in Biscayne Bay off Miami prompted the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence to ask the Justice Department for a formal investigation, which is now underway.

There are now two major national mysteries which the FBI

hasn't been able to solve—the disappearance of former Teamster boss Jimmy Hoffa, and the brutal gangland "hits" of Giancana and Roselli. The CIA, which recruited the mobsters to get rid of Castro, has denied any connection with the death of either crime figure. It's possible Castro elements rubbed them out, or Mafia agents with their own personal reasons.

There are many loose ends dangling frustratingly in connection with the Giancana-Roselli deaths. Giancana was said to have been slain by someone close to him. Both men were friends with Judith Exner, an alleged girl friend of President Kennedy—and at same time of the alleged Exner-Kennedy Liaisons. It was the FBI which tipped Kennedy off about the underworld connections of his White House visitor.

The nation is being fed one suspenseful ingredient after another dealing with Washington cloak-and-dagger policy, particularly the role played by mobsters when it was decided in the highest councils that Castro should be eliminated from the scene, one way or another.

The threads in this still-unraveling tapestry of suspense obviously pose a monumental challenge to the resources and the skills of our top investigative agency.

We recall, now that Giancana and Roselli—who were allies for decades—have talked, that breaking the "code of silence" is looked upon with murderous eyes by the underworld still. The questions facing the FBI is: Who would want both men rubbed out and for what reasons? We have a feeling that Roselli's secret testimony may provide an important clue.

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